

Frequently Asked Questions

Providing a Context for the Mainstream Core Standards (MCS) for Headteachers – February 2021

Question: There is a phrase referring to Section 33 of the Children and Families Act – can you explain further on this?

Answer: This phrase explains Section 33 of Children and Families Act which sets out the rights of children and young people to be educated in a maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution:

33 Children and young people with EHC plans

(1) This section applies where a local authority is securing the preparation of an EHC plan for a child or young person who is to be educated in a school or post-16 institution.

(2) In a case within section 39(5) or 40(2), the local authority must secure that the plan provides for the child or young person to be educated in a maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution, unless that is incompatible with—

(a) the wishes of the child's parent or the young person, or

(b) the provision of efficient education for others.

(3) A local authority may rely on the exception in subsection (2)(b) in relation to maintained nursery schools, mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions in its area taken as a whole only if it shows that there are no reasonable steps that it could take to prevent the incompatibility.

(4) A local authority may rely on the exception in subsection (2)(b) in relation to a particular maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution only if it shows that there are no reasonable steps that it or the governing body, proprietor or principal could take to prevent the incompatibility.

(5) The governing body, proprietor or principal of a maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution may rely on the exception in subsection (2)(b) only if they show that there are no reasonable steps that they or the local authority could take to prevent the incompatibility.

Question: We need to consider training and development opportunities for our newest teachers so that they clearly understand how to provide the best possible inclusive approach for all student. How do we ensure this happens when new staff arrive? What about ITT?

Answer: Schools should provide, as an integral part of their induction programme for newly qualified teachers, training to develop newly qualified teachers' understanding of the impact of high incidence special educational needs on CYPs' experience of school and how to effectively support their needs in the classroom and across the school day. The Mainstream Core Standards document has been shared with Canterbury Christ Church University for use as part of their ITT programmes.

Question: A directory of who to ask and who can offer support would be useful rather than spending years trying to work out who the right people to ask are - shouldn't be just 'who you know' connections

Answer: We are working on the production of a directory of services and support available to schools so that this information can be accessed from the Local Area. This directory will be available on the Local Offer and KELSI.

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Question: We discussed local SENCO networks, these seem quite variable across the Local Area. Perhaps Kent could facilitate this process?

Answer: Local SENCO networks are developed within Districts so do vary across the County. Most Districts organise regular SENCO Forums, usually in liaison with STLS. The SEND Service Provision Evaluation Officers (PEOs) will now deliver updates and provide support and guidance to SENCO's through their attendance of SENCO Forums where the SENCO Forum is in agreement.

Question: Is there monitoring of LIFT models in different areas to ensure compatibility between areas? Can there be local directory of strengths in different areas to make it easier for us to get advice quickly as STLS overstretched and can take a long time to visit.

Answer: Each District LIFT group/STLS provides data to KCC on attendance of LIFT, outcomes of LIFT discussions and the activity of STLS. We are reviewing how we use the data we receive to better monitor the impact of this work on outcomes for CYP. The funding arrangements for District resources to support the development of Inclusive practice and the SEND offer are also under review.

A review of STLS is under way to inform the Commissioning of the Service from April 2022.

Question: Is it possible to have a directory of expertise across Kent so that we are aware of where this can be found. Within Kent, universal models of LIFT/ expertise and support for SENCOs when they need support for individuals.

Answer: First part of question covered above. There is a universal model in place currently with an understanding that there needs to be an element of flexibility of offer in relation to the profile of need and existing experience and expertise in each District.

Question: Are printed copies of the Mainstream Core Standards document available? Would be helpful for day to day reference for teachers and TA's

Answer: The MCS are not currently available in printed format but this is being considered.

Question: There is not enough provision in special schools, meaning children are not in appropriate placements. There are 700 children currently out of education waiting for specialist placements, which is simply not good enough.

Answer: There is a significant and increasing pressure for special school places across Kent. There are number of factors driving this increase which are being explored both through the Written Statement of Action and more widely. We are developing modelling tools to enable us to better predict future need and commissioning. In the shorter term, the SEND Service, KCC Commissioners, Area Education teams and Special School Head teachers are working together to address the current situation.